Service as Intersubjective Struggle

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Abstract As long as service is characterized as value co-creation achieved jointly by multiple participants, service lies between the participants rather than reduced to any single one. This intersubjective nature of service forces us to break with subject-object dualism. That is to say, the customer and the service provider—subject—cannot judge the value of the service—object—from a distance. The customer as well as the provider is implicated in the service. When the value of service is concerned, the value of the participants, who are inseparable from the service, is also at issue. Specifically, they need to present who they are. An ethnomethodological study of videotaped customer-provider interactions at traditional sushi bars in Tokyo reveals that while engaging in service interactions, customers present how familiar and qualified they are in relation to the service and providers present how special their service is. By bringing this intersubjectivity to the fore, this chapter proposes a new theoretical perspective portraying service as dialectical struggle in which involved parties seek to demonstrate their own selves in relation to others. This perspective helps move beyond the notion of subjective customer satisfaction and explain some counterintuitive facts of services such as service providers who do not appear to care about customers' satisfaction.

Introduction

The study reported in this chapter begins with a puzzle: Service at sushi bars in Tokyo appears to be organized differently from that reported in prior service research. Sushi chefs, who prepare and serve sushi facing customers, rarely smile, a situation that does not put customers unfamiliar to these settings at ease. Written menus are not provided and prices are not revealed. Customers do not know the price of a meal until they receive the check. Above all, sushi chefs do not try to please customers. As a result, many customers, not only foreign tourists but also those raised in Japan, are intimidated by overall atmosphere of this service. Yet, these patrons are still willing to pay a significant amount of money for this experience. How can services that do not seek to ingratiate patrons attract so many customers and prosper?

Service science (Maglio & Spohrer, 2008; Spohrer, Maglio, Bailey, & Gruhl, 2007) and specifically its foundational service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008; 2016) provide a framework for beginning to understand how

and why this kind of service is possible. That is to say, the idea that value is co-created through interactions among customers, providers, and other actors, including both direct and indirect interactions, is an important step in illustrating this type of exchange. As no single player can unilaterally create value, we need to examine interactions between the various individuals involved. S-D logic in general has enabled us to examine interactions in which actors integrate resources through institutionalized processes; in particular, some scholars have advanced the interactional aspects of this process (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006; Fyrberg & Jüriado, 2009).

Yet, even within the S-D logic literature, there is no readily available theoretical explanation providing answers to the above puzzle, and there is even less relevant evidence in the larger body of service literature. Therefore, we need to take key ideas from S-D logic and synthesize a new theoretical perspective. To provide a basis for this theoretical development, we delve into actual service interactions through which value is co-created. Specifically, this study conducts empirical research by videotaping and analyzing customer interactions at four upscale sushi bars in Tokyo.

The current study elaborates the concept of intersubjectivity (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2010; Helkkula, Kelleher, & Pihlstrom, 2012; Löbler, 2011; Peters et al., 2014), which here refers to interactionally achieved social order. That is, rather than reducing social order into what people subjectively hold in their minds, we analyze how actors present their own understanding of a situation to each other in their observable actions. We draw on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) in elaborating this intersubjectivity. Obviously humans do not have the power to read others' minds, yet participants in these interactions can still achieve service as an ordered phenomenon. This means that participants have their own methods to achieve this order without external analysts to determine what others subjectively have in mind. This last point is vital, as the subjective information is not accessible to others and thus cannot be the basis for social order. Furthermore, in this intersubjective framework, actors cannot detach themselves from the service and subjectively judge its value; they are implicated in the service itself and, by taking actions observable to others, need to present their own selves in this context. The goal of this chapter is to outline this new theoretical perspective and advance our understanding of service within S-D logic.

Service as Intersubjectivity

Value Co-Creation in Service

With an emphasis on value co-creation and resource integration through direct and indirect interactions, S-D logic allows us to examine the puzzle of service

interactions. From a S-D logic perspective, actors collaborate and co-create value (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Even though value is considered to be uniquely and phenomenologically determined by each participant, stakeholders co-create the context that frames the phenomenological experience (Akaka & Vargo, 2015; Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Helkkula, 2011; Löbler, 2011). A business cannot dictate value; it can only propose the value. Service requires active participation from all involved parties, including customers. Value is co-created through joint activity, and therefore the value cannot be reduced to any one of the actors or to the objective conditions.

Several scholars have discussed the centrality of interaction and therefore the intersubjective nature of service. In contrasting dialogue with communication, Ballantyne and Varey (2006) wrote:

> It follows that dialogue cannot be reduced to one person's activity alone, or reduced to one person's perspective alone – it is inherently relational. Engaging in dialogical interaction is not unidirectional, self-serving, or accomplishment by control. On the contrary, the purpose is open-ended, discovery oriented, and value creating. (p. 339)

We bring this interactional and relational conception of service to the fore. Value co-creation is then in the "inter" between actors rather than in each individual. Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber (2010) made this clear in their first proposition: "Value has a collective and intersubjective dimension and should be understood as value-in-social-context" (p. 333). Similarly, Acknowledging both the subjective and intersubjective aspects of value, Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström (2012) similarly stated in their first proposition: "Value in the experience is individually intrasubjective and socially intersubjective" (p. 3).

In line with this debate, Löbler (2011) clarified that S-D logic is characterized primarily as intersubjective orientation: "Proposition 1: Service-dominant logic is laid out as an intersubjective undertaking" (p. 67). Although some parts of S-D logic appear to fall under subjectivism, it is essentially an effort to overcome the subjectivist orientation that focuses "on the subjects investigating the object" (p. 56); therefore, "service is interactive and hence intersubjective" (Löbler, 2011, p. 62). This intersubjective orientation of S-D logic should be more thoroughly extended, as Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006, p. 306) claim, if we "move explicitly from a subject–object relation between marketers and consumers towards a more subject–subject relation."

As Husserl (1950) formulated from the standpoint of phenomenology, intersubjectivity refers to what happens between people; this is in contrast to subjectivity, which is what each person has in mind. The fundamental difference between these two is the social reality that is achieved between people and the subjective perception and construction of the world in each person's mind. If we begin with what people subjectively perceive and transcendentally construct, as Husserl did, it is difficult, if not impossible, to explain how what one person sees is the same as what is seen by another, and thereby how the objective world can be constructed. In everyday situations, a person obviously does not analogically infer that what others see

from their standpoint must be the same as what s/he sees at the moment; transcendental constitution must take place at a more fundamental, a priori level (e.g., Merleau-Ponty, 2002).

It is, however, difficult to explain how social order is achieved in reality if we group all explanations into a priori transcendental structures; this is particularly true for social scientists who must explain actual social phenomena. As a result, some theorists have moved beyond the subjectivist framework and sought to base their work in the intersubjective realm. That is, we should not begin with considering what people see, think, or feel internally but focus on the communication or interaction among people. Here we can review only two major scholars who have developed relevant frameworks. Luhmann (2013) famously placed individual subjectivity not in the social system but in its external environment. He explained that the social system as a series of communications is closed and has its own self-organizing principles; individual subjectivity as psychic systems are coupled with this social system, but only in an indirect manner. While Luhmann goes even further to eschew subjectivity altogether, the point that the social analysis should not base itself on subjectivity is an important step. Similarly, Habermas (1987) criticized the philosophy of consciousness, which begins with subjectivity, and advocated intersubjective communicative actions. He aimed to construct a philosophical system based on this intersubjectivity.

In the context of this chapter, we specifically build on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). While the term intersubjectivity is not typically used in ethnomethodology, this designation helps connect the basic idea of ethnomethodology to S-D logic. Intersubjectivity here refers to the social process in which individuals display their respective understandings to each other and achieve alignment regarding what is occurring in a particular situation. What one individual subjectively thinks is irrelevant because others in the situation have no magical access to this person's thoughts; each individual needs to display his or her understanding and others in turn display their understandings of this original action. Without knowing what others have in mind, people have their own methods to achieve intersubjectivity. All actions are undertaken intersubjectively in that each person makes every action observable, understandable, and describable by others. Ethnomethodology clarifies this through the notion of accountability (Garfinkel, 1967). When we take an action, we do not do so at a random time or location. We choose to do so in a particular situation to render the action observable, understandable, and therefore accountable; that is, others in the situation can account for it. For instance, a service employee in a restaurant solicits a drink order in a particular way. He cannot ask this question when a customer has a full glass: in this case, "Would you like anything more to drink?" would sound like a complaint that the customer is not drinking enough or is drinking too slowly. Note that we do not need to clarify what the service employee had in mind subjectively; the action has an accountable meaning for those in the situation precisely because of what the action does in the particular context. People do not take actions blindly; rather they make their actions accountable by utilizing

and constructing context. Ethnomethodology can empirically analyze how this is achieved.

In intersubjective understandings achieved among individuals, it is not assumed individuals have the same understanding because each one cannot know what others have in mind. There is always a possibility that people misunderstand each other. Yet, we can and do live with this reality. We seek to understand what others are thinking but ultimately we conduct our lives without a complete understanding of the others around us, and we are often surprised to see that misunderstandings can go unnoticed for quite some time.

Subject-Object Entanglement

Furthermore, this view of intersubjectivity means that we can no longer assume subject-object dichotomy. If the service context is co-created, then a person, a "subject" if we use this concept for the time being, cannot keep a safe distance from the service, the "object"; this person is involved in the service (Sampson, 2010). Let us assume that a customer is evaluating the value of a restaurant service. Yet, this service is a joint achievement in which the customer is also implicated. Therefore, she is in fact evaluating not only the service but also herself, who is part of the service. That is to say, the value of service encompasses the value of the involved parties. Specifically, a customer's value is centered on the issue of who the customer is. In upscale French restaurants, customers may feel anxious picking wine from a lengthy list; there is a concern as to how much knowledge and experience this customer has and whether she is qualified for the service. This is precisely because she is part of the service and her value, who she is, matters. As Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006) wrote, service processes "always *implicate the one in comprehending the other*" (emphasis in original).

Therefore, the value of the service cannot be separated from the value of the individuals themselves. When individuals enter a service context that they co-create, these persons inevitably present themselves to each other just as presentation of self is inherent part of social gathering (Goffman, 1959). Individuals present themselves as qualified customers having certain tastes, and service providers present themselves as professionals with sophisticated and distinguished skills. Here, already people are dealing with value; they are showing what value they can claim for themselves. This value is intersubjectively presented and negotiated rather than subjectively determined.

There is certainly an emphasis on value in the realm of subjectivity. For instance, there is value of a fine wine at a restaurant. When customers judge the wine, this is a value that they can subjectively judge as the individuals are not immediately related to object of value. Nonetheless, there also exists an intersubjective value; if a customer says, "This wine is delicious," when tasting a rare wine, this remark affects the person who made it. Here, the customer is defining himself as somebody

not sophisticated enough to use more nuanced language when tasting a fine wine. The customer is implicated in the value. Therefore, the point is not to deny the subjective value of an object, e.g., the perceived quality of wine, but to highlight the intersubjective value that is an inevitable part of service. If we focus only on the subjective value, then we need not talk about co-creation; we simply remain in goods-dominant logic.

Intersubjective Struggle

One model to explain this intersubjectivity is dialectical struggle for recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 1995; 2008). This model is useful precisely because of the dialectical nature of service: When a service provider tries to satisfy a customer, the customer will not be satisfied in an expected way. This relationship can be explained following Hegelian lord-bondsman (master-slave) dialectic (Hegel, 1977).

The Hegelian lord-bondsman dialectic posits that, to the extent that we are self-consciousness, we are both the one that is conscious of something else and the one that our consciousness is conscious of; we have ourselves as both subject and object. As such, we are interested in how we are viewed as well as how we view things. Therefore, we are all seeking recognition from others. To seek recognition, we must prove ourselves and demonstrate our abilities. Yet, when we try to impress others, we inevitably negate these others as we exceed their expectations. We show that we are better than they think we are. As a result, we demonstrate that we are better than others, i.e., negating others, and others also try to negate us. This mutual negation leads to what Hegel sees as a life-and-death struggle.

Here, one member of this struggle comes to prove that she can be certain of herself without reliance on others; she becomes a master. The other comes to rely on this master in order to define himself; he becomes a slave. The master can now gain the recognition that she has sought; that is to say, the slave gives her absolute recognition. Nonetheless, this recognition does not work as expected because recognition from somebody dependent is no longer of value. That is, the recognition no longer acts as recognition because it is not from an independent person capable of judging whether she is worthy of his recognition. The dominant relationship in which he is subdued therefore leads to a lack of value in his recognition. This is the master-slave dialectic: When we obtain the recognition we seek, we lose it.

When a service provider tries to satisfy a customer, the service provider becomes dependent on the customer to the extent that the customer's choices and actions can have a significant influence on the service provider. Then, the service this customer receives from a dependent individual is perceived of lesser value. This phenomenon directly illustrates the intersubjective nature of action; we do not simply create reality in our own heads. One's actions are always in relation to other individuals and therefore involve the issue of who one is vis-à-vis these other individuals. The

action of satisfying a customer inevitably alters the relationships between the service provider and the customer and therefore alters who the service provider is and who the customer is. Because service is intersubjective, this dialectic struggle is a fundamental property of service.

In the same way, when service providers try to show value of their service, they do so only in relation to their customers. Presenting a service as valuable, service providers show that the service is superior vis-à-vis the customers. This involves negation of the customers. That is to say, service providers define their services to be better than what the customers experience in their everyday life. In upscale French restaurants, customers are often given menus and wine lists that are very esoteric. Difficulty may arise from an absence of descriptions or ones that they are filled with unfamiliar language; these are signals showing the offerings at the restaurant exceed what customers can easily comprehend. That is, if the restaurant only provides what customers find familiar, there will likely not be special value in the experience.

Intersubjective Cultural Representations

Although the above discussion focuses on dyadic relations between a service provider and a customer, intersubjectivity is not confined to these two parties. Scholars have criticized such a narrow view as the extension of goods-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2016; Vargo, Lusch, & Akaka, 2010). In service dominant logic, a clear distinction between the service provider and the customer is suspect. All parties contribute and integrate resources to realize benefit for the others.

The intersubjective struggle outlined above belongs to the realm of culture; it is not part of the individual characteristics or a specific social relationship between the two parties. When individuals engage in this type of intersubjective struggle, they are in effect attempting to define and negotiate a specific cultural encounter. A service provider tries to define certain culture that customers would value highly. Customers on the other hand try to influence the culture and define themselves in relation to it. The culture is part of the consumers' as well as other actors' operant resources (Arnould, Price, & Malshe, 2006). Individuals apply a variety of cultural resources, such as cultural schemas and categories, and embodied tastes to this process. Moreover they also bring specialized language and 'lifeworld projects' to an interaction (Arnould et al., 2006).

Here, culture is not considered to exist as a universal norm. Culture is always a relational concept (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). We do not think of American culture when eating a hamburger or Japanese culture when using chopsticks; we simply engage in these actions and take them for granted. The notion of culture emerges only when we come into contact with others who have a different set of orientations. Therefore, culture is constructed from social relation with others. To this extent,

then, culture concerns defining oneself in relation to others, which in turn involves defining others in relation to oneself (Cayla & Arnould, 2008; Said, 1978).

This aspect of culture can be easily seen in the example of an upscale French restaurant that defines itself as sophisticated, a self-definition that is always in relation to others, e.g., customers and competitors. For instance, a restaurant's definition of its customers and the way customers define themselves are both parts of this self-definition because the restaurant is suggesting that in relation to the customer the restaurant represents a sophisticated culture. That is to say, these customers should find the experience non-quotidian and special, different from their everyday existence. It follows that these customers would feel a need to live up to that sophistication. In other words, an upscale French restaurant is not simply cultural because of its geographical origins; it is consistently and actively presenting a certain culture to the customers.

An Illustration: Sushi Bars

To empirically demonstrate how this type of intersubjectivity works, sushi bars in Tokyo can be illustrative. As shown in the very beginning of this chapter, this research began with a puzzle: sushi chefs behaved in ways that could not be explained easily by prior theories of service. These chefs made the service difficult and intimidating for customers. The theoretical perspective reported in this chapter, namely intersubjectivity, was developed in order to explain this phenomenon.

Although sushi bars comprise a broad range of businesses, the discussion here focuses on the top tier sushi bars in Tokyo, i.e., the most expensive category. It is this top tier of sushi bars that epitomize the sushi culture that Japanese citizens would think of when hearing the word "sushi." These sushi bars are quite expensive, ranging from USD150 to 400, including drinks, per person. This chapter also focuses on the Tokyo style sushi bars, which is the most typical style of sushi in Japan; the style of sushi that has come to define sushi culture originated in Tokyo and is still considered to be specific to Tokyo. This is called Tokyo-style (*Edomae*) sushi.

This study conducts an examination of sushi bars in order to illustrate the intersubjective view of service. To detail this phenomenon, typical interactions at sushi bars will be reviewed. However, before the description of interactions at sushi bars, a summary description of sushi service will be provided, particularly its specific culture.

Sushi Culture

Although sushi is now a global cuisine, sushi in Japan has a unique culture. For the Japanese, sushi means not only the sensory pleasure of the food itself, but it also

carries the connotations of a unique experience. Sushi bars are considered to be intimidating. Master chefs are often inhospitable and conduct service without smiling or other outward signs of graciousness. Customers often feel anxious ordering sushi from these chefs; eating sushi in front of them is also quite intimidating. Perhaps the most salient characteristic of sushi bars is the fact that no prices are displayed for food and drinks. Customers are given the bill only after the meal. Moreover, most high-end sushi bars have no written menu. In a few, there is a list of available fish on the wall, but still here the information is minimal and price is not indicated.

Therefore, customers are expected to have certain background knowledge so they can properly order food and drinks without menu listings or prices. Customers should know what kind of fish is in season and also have some idea about price ranges. They can always ask for a chef's recommendation; however, some chefs refuse to give a recommendation. A typical joke is that chefs reply, "We don't serve anything that we don't recommend." This type of interaction places a great deal of burden on customers.

Similarly, traditional sushi bars have a system in which customers order one item of sushi at a time. This system is called "Okonomi" or "as you like." Customers choose whatever type of sushi they want. The proper order in which customers should choose sushi is the subject of interesting debate. There is a standard custom that one should begin with white meat fish because of the lighter taste and end with gourd rolls and sweet tasting sushi similar to desserts. People debate whether this should be seen as a rule; many reject this idea and suggest that customers should choose whatever they want in whatever order. Yet, Japanese customers are aware of this discourse when they frequent a sushi bar. Here, again customers are expected to know certain rules.

Many sushi bars have adopted a chef's choice system, known as "Omakase." Here, customers do not order each piece of fish themselves, rather they are given a selection by the chef. Even in this case, customers often supplement their meal with their own choices after the Omakase course has concluded. In this case, the choices are difficult because customers are expected to make correct choices among the sushi they have tasted as part of the course; for instance, picking selections that the chefs consider to be excellent is a sign of proper taste. They also need to order drinks individually, all without understanding of prices until the bill comes. Drinks are also the subject of debate; some say that people should not drink alcohol in sushi bars because traditionally people ate sushi with green tea and others say that sake, made of rice, conflicts with taste of the rice in sushi. Many other people believe sake pairs well with sushi. Still others suggest that white wine goes well with sushi. Therefore, choosing the right drink in this situation is not straightforward.

There are many other manners and rituals found at these establishments. It is considered the norm to eat sushi by hand, not with chopsticks, which is awkward for most Japanese who are not accustomed to this practice. Customers are expected to eat sushi as soon as they receive it from the chef. Leaving sushi on the plate is considered rude because the sushi is best when it is first prepared and can quickly

dry out. Additionally, there are taboos regarding what people can talk about and what language is acceptable in these situations. Some customers desire to show off extensive knowledge and experience. This is not advised; in fact, many people strongly object to this kind of behavior seeing it as vulgar.

Methodology

The current chapter incorporates ethnomethodological research in which interactions were videotaped as they naturally happen and analyzed them in detail. The empirical material is taken from the author's research project, parts of which have been reported elsewhere (Yamauchi & Hiramoto, 2016). This previous paper had a theoretical agenda different than that explored in this chapter. However, some of the same empirical materials are used here. Ethnomethodology is a sub-field of sociology initiated by Harold Garfinkel (1967) and subsequently developed by other researchers (Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 2007); it seeks to explicate the methods people use to accomplish social order. Specifically, in terms of the current study, when two or more people meet to engage in some kind of social activity, such as placing an order in a service context, the goal is to explain how they can achieve that activity by presenting their understanding of each other's actions.

It is important to note that we can achieve a social activity without knowing what others actually have in mind; for example, we can place an order without the provider reading our thoughts. When we take an action specifying an order, we make sure that our action is accountable as an action of placing an order. Therefore, ethnomethodology is particularly useful in examining how service is achieved through interactions.

Multiple camcorders and a number of voice recorders were placed in four selected sushi establishments. All the audio and video data were synchronized. Then all interactions between providers and customers were transcribed. Acts of ordering appeared to be the most critical moments because a number of actions were required of the customers, whereas in receiving food the customers did not need to do much except for providing an acknowledgement (e.g., nodding). Intersubjectivity is particularly salient when some discrepancy exists between parties as opposed to situations where things smoothly unfold. For the same reason, the analysis of the initial part of the service is reported in this chapter. The initial interactions are critical because at this moment the customer has not familiarized him or herself with the service and the chef has not learned much about this customer. Analysis can continue and show similar patterns for subsequent interactions but is not reported here in full due to limitations of space.

Analysis of Initial Service Interactions at Sushi Bars

The initial interactions unfold as following. First of all, the interaction begins with the provider's question asking for a drink order. Subsequently, we see three different patterns in customer responses. Concretely, the type of customer who is sitting at the counter becomes evident through the ways in which customers respond to the initial question.

In the following fragment, a customer gives an answer in a concise manner. Here AS indicates an assistant who assist delivering drinks. In most cases, chefs behind the counter are the first to address the customers a question but in this case, the assistant approaches and asks the question while the chef watches the interaction. B3 is a customer, "B" indicates the second of the four sushi bars studied. The numbers are uniquely assigned to customers. Brackets "[ ]" indicate that multiple spoken utterances overlap, i.e., they start at the same time. The number in parentheses "(0.2)" indicates the seconds of pause—0.2 seconds in this case. The dot "(.)" indicates a short pause less than 0.2 seconds. Colons ":" indicate prolongation of sound. Double parentheses "((something))" are the authors' addition or comments.

Fragment 1

```
01 AS : What would you like to dr[ink
02 B3 :                          [Beer please
03     (.)
04 AS : As for beer (.)((We have)) large and small [bottles
05 B3 :                                           [We↑:ll
06 B3 : All right then a small bottle.
07     (0.2) ((AS nods))
```

The first question in line 01 is a standard one, which was consistently observed in all the four sushi bars. This question is asked after brief greeting and while the customer is seating himself. Some observations can be made. First, the customer indicates "beer" in a quite concise manner without any preface. Also note that he started answering while the assistant was still asking a question. These features suggest (to them as well as to researchers) that the customer had no difficulty in understanding the question and moreover expected to receive this very question at that moment. He required no time to think about his choice.

Although all these observations may sound trivial, we should understand that at this moment the customer was not given any information about what drinks were available in this sushi bar or, for that matter, no written menu. Beer would seem to be a safe choice because it is available in any restaurant and the price is assumed not be exorbitant. This customer was patronizing the sushi bar for the first time, something of which both the assistant and chef were aware. However, the assistant did not even give the customer any time to settle into his seat.

Nonetheless, we cannot simply take this interpretation as a matter that shows generalizable facts. We need to explain how participants themselves exhibit this in

their understanding. To do so, we can turn to cases where customers do not answer the question as concisely. The following fragment took place at the third sushi bar (C). Among multiple sushi chefs, Chf2 was involved with this customer, C3.

Fragment 2

```
01 Chf2 : Drinks
02        (.)
03 C3   : .hhhh(0.3)The::n(.) Shall I get a glass of be[e::r
04 Chf2 :                                               [Uh:m
05        (.) we have medium and small bottles
06        (0.2)
07 C3   : Then small bottle:: please.
08 Chf2 : A small bott[le
09 C3   :             [Yes
```

Compared to the last fragment, certain features are noticeable. First, there is no overlap of utterances and instead a brief pause (line 02) after the question, which is also more concise, comprising only one phrase (in Japanese, "o-nomimono wa"). Second, there is a rather long preface to the answer. ".hhhhh" indicates an extended in-breath. Third, the answer is more elaborate with a complete sentence, compared to the concise answer in the previous fragment. Fourth, there is a prolonged sound at the end of the sentence "bee::r". These aspects suggest that the customer was not ready to answer promptly and required some time to respond. The prolonged sound at the end was issued while he was briefly looking at the chef, indicating that he was seeking some feedback. In contrast to the previous fragment, this customer presents actions demonstrating the chef's reaction is relevant to complete his talk. From this, we can see that this customer was uncertain as to how the chef would interpret his action.

We can elaborate this analysis with a similar case, in which the same pattern can be seen. This fragment is from the first sushi bar (A). Equal signs "=" indicate that two turns were connected without any gap (typically a brief pause is inserted between turns). Greater than and less than signs show the pace of utterance—"<slow>" is said slowly and ">fast<" is spoken rapidly.

Fragment 3

```
01 Chf : U:::m .hhh to begin (0.5) [What] would you like to
02       drink.=
03 A1a :                           [Yes-]
04 A1a : =Mm::::(.)because it is <humid>: I'll have ddraft
05       beer:
06 Chf : >Let's go with draft b[eer<
07 A1a :                       [Is dra[ft okay¿
08 Chf :                              [>Yes it is<
((continues))
```

The customer's answer in line 02 shows features similar to the answer in the previous example, specifically, the preface and the prolongation at the end. We also see that he stammered slightly when saying draft, producing "ddraft". Here, we further observe that the customer provides a reason for his order, "because it is <humid>:" Why does he feel he has to give a reason for his order? The answer does not lie in his actual thoughts at that moment; rather it should be located in terms of how this action is presented. We can observe that both the customer and the chef can see that the reason was relevant at this moment for the customer. He was justifying his order or giving more information so that his order can be understood properly. In any event, this customer presented the uncertain nature of his order, which could not stand on its own.

Looking at how the chef responds in line 06 validates this analysis. This response beginning with "Let's" is a noticeably emphatic action. By using "Let's" the chef involves himself. Effectively he is signaling agreement to the customer's choice. Through this response, the chef presented his own understanding of the customer's action, and this affirmation from the chef would be relevant to the customer. In short, the second pattern shows that the customers present uncertainty of their actions in response to the chef's initial question although they could succeed in completing the utterance indicating an order.

As the third pattern shows, chefs know that some customers have trouble answering their questions. The parentheses without a number show that talk was not discernible.

Fragment 4

```
01 Chef : What would you like to drink
02        (0.5)
03 A3a  : We::ll uh::m (1.2) (........)[do you have
04 Chef :                              [Ah beer,
05 A3a  : un:=
06 Chef : =sake,
07 A3a  : Yes.
08 Chef : U:m shochu.
09        (0.4)
10 A3a  : °hum°=
11 Chef : =a glass of (0.3) white wine or, champagne
12        [or something
13 A3a  : [huh:
14 A3a  : .hh uh:m <for me> beer(0.3)for beer how many
15        kinds do you have
((continues))
```

When the customer's response is not forthcoming in line 03, the chef quickly started listing possible items to choose from, beginning with beer in line 04. When the customer was talking in line 03, he was looking right and left, visibly seeking information, e.g., what other customers are drinking and some other information

within the space of the restaurant. In seeing this, the chef offered some hints. Then, the customer could choose one of the suggestions, beer. Therefore, a customer not being able to answer is easily understandable to the chef in this situation. The chefs often pose questions lacking clues; however, if a customer is not forthcoming with a response, a chef will promptly provide some hints.

These fragments show that something more is occurring than a customer simply stating what he or she wants. Through these interactions the customers present who they are. Some customers can give a concise answer, demonstrating themselves to be more or less experienced sushi customers, while others present uncertainty in their actions and required a provider's affirmation. After the drink orders, the customers and chefs move onto food orders. Although no space is available to report them, we see similar interactions, only more salient. That is to say, a brief question is asked without much clue as to an appropriate response. Some customers can answer concisely, others struggle, and some could not complete the order without making it clear that they did not understand the chefs' questions.

An Intersubjective Explanation of the Sushi Case

We began with the puzzle of why sushi chefs make their service difficult and intimidating to customers and why customers still enjoy this service and pay for it. In the interactions above, we saw that the chefs ask a rather difficult question in a situation where they give no hint for an appropriate answer and there is no visible information to help the customers respond. The chefs then observe how the customers answer. Therefore, they are "testing" customers to see how experienced these patrons are. In more general terms, in trying to define themselves as valuable all services construct a certain culture. Sushi chefs define their service as sophisticated and esoteric when posing a difficult question to customers who are in the middle of seating themselves; they suggest that they offer sophisticated service for customers who are knowledgeable and competent enough to answer the question without visible or audible clues.

In turn, the customers cannot maintain safe distance from this sophisticated type of service. They need to demonstrate that they are sufficiently knowledgeable, skilled, and qualified to participate in the service. Thereby, the customers try to live up to the high standards and, to this end, often reach beyond their normal knowledge and skills. Customers are implicated in the service. When they are presented service as representing a certain value, their actions in response to the proposed value is part of the service. Therefore, it is understandable that customers participating in this sushi culture are expected to have a high level of applicable knowledge and a set of relevant skills. There is no clear separation between the customer and the service, and because the customer participates in the culture, where the customer stands within the culture becomes an issue.

In this situation intimidating customers is not irrational. Service providers need to push the customers, as these providers must prove that the service is valuable, i.e., something beyond the customer's knowledge and experience. The service is presented as being more sophisticated and of more value than any service the customers encounter in their daily lives. If service providers presented their services as being ordinary and mundane, then the customers would see this as simply engaging in everyday reality. Challenged in this manner, customers then present themselves in various ways. Some show that they are in fact not so knowledgeable, and others show that they are. In either situation, they cannot simply answer the chef's questions by conveying what they want; they need to present their own selves.

This case of high sushi culture, although illustrative, begs further questions. Do all services need to intimidate customers? Or are these interactions only specific to sushi or similar kinds of upscale services? How about more ordinary services as opposed to the upscale category? We need to clarify how we can generally understand the current case. To this end, we will review how upscale services are organized in general and then discuss other kinds of services not in the upscale category.

Beyond the Sushi Case

Service Based on High-End Culture

We can begin by describing the general patterns of highbrow, sophisticated services in general, such as upscale restaurants and luxury hotels. To illustrate this pattern, we can draw on several ideas of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), who more than any other theorist has elucidated the highbrow culture vis-à-vis the lowbrow. This discussion also helps look beyond the particular interactions at sushi bars above.

First, highbrow culture emphasizes formality as opposed to necessity. Bourdieu (1984, p. 6) wrote, "The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition-linked to different distances from necessity—between the taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty—or luxury—which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function." This taste of freedom is aristocratic and bourgeois value. The taste that emphasizes necessity is seen to be related to labor and lower classes of people who cannot help but investing in necessities (Bourdieu, 1984; Veblen, 1899). In contrast, people who try to present themselves as culturally sophisticated emphasize formality over necessity. They can show that they have the resources and time to invest in formality, something that does not necessarily give them any immediate practical return.

Therefore, many service organizations that lay claim to high value follow this logic of formality. For these businesses, the service should not be efficient and convenient; instead it must feature a number of elements that are not tied to necessity but related to aspects of formality. In upscale services, there are myriad rules and procedures that customers need to follow. French restaurants have table manners and wine tasting rituals. As noted above, sushi has a number of such manners and rituals. Eating sushi by hand is one such example. People try to provide rationale for that, e.g., sushi is so fragile that a gentle touch is required and the past sushi was a fast-food type snack that people tossed into their mouths by hand. Yet, the point of these manners and rituals is the fact that they are the opposite of rational.

Second, the highbrow culture requires individuals to have certain embodied competencies to produce practices of a particular style. Bourdieu (1984) called such competencies inculcated in bodily "habitus". Behaving elegantly and in a sophisticated manner is an important part of the culture. It is not easy to behave properly in sushi bars, French restaurants, and other upscale service locales. Not only is it difficult to elegantly eat sushi by hand, but also conversing with the chef in a manner proper to the setting is also no simple task. In a French restaurant, customers are required to have mastered the ritual of wine tasting and possess proper language to voice their opinions. Choosing cheese may also be difficult. At many restaurants, during the latter part of the meal, more than ten kinds of cheese are presented on a tray or cart. Without explanation of each one provided, customers are asked, "What would you like?" Being able to pick a few types of cheese that one prefers without any fuss—not to mention, knowing the names—is part of the qualification to be a customer in such an establishment. In general, upscale services are designed to be difficult for customers to understand and thus allow them to demonstrate refined skills.

Third, in addition to being able to produce practices in a harmonious manner, individuals also need to have embodied skills to appreciate subtle differences in flavor, style, and aesthetic. In fact, it is not just appreciating the differences among items, but preferring certain things to other choices is part of the process. Therefore, we often emphasize that people have proper "taste" (Bourdieu, 1984). What people prefer in the highbrow culture appears to be ostentatious and even hollow in the eyes of those with popular taste.

In the postmodern age, defining tastes in highbrow culture has become more complex. As most services are aestheticized and made accessible to the mass population, people with high cultural skills tend to find luxurious things distasteful (Holt, 1998). These people tend to prefer things that require much intrinsic effort to appreciate rather than something that can be paid for (Holt, 2002). On the other hand, people in high culture often prefer the popular, resulting in what is often called the "omnivore" (Peterson, 2005; Peterson & Kern, 1996). This view does not show that taste classification has become meaningless; there is nothing in it that contradicts the Bourdieuian framework of cultural sophistication (Atkinson, 2011; Prior, 2011). By presenting their taste as distinguished and requiring special effort or

knowledge, persons can claim a certain social status, which is Bourdieu's central argument.

All this discussion may be summarized by the seemingly paradoxical statement; 'the more expensive the service is, the less service one can receive.' A higher price tends to mean an upscale and sophisticated service that emphasizes refined tastes. Such services tend to be less friendly, with the employees typically looking more professional than friendly. While employees in a lower end service are often instructed to smile and come across as friendly, professional employees dress immaculately and behave seriously but elegantly (Dion & Borraz, 2017). High-end services tend to provide customers with less information. Comparison of the menus of high-end and lower-end restaurants revealed that the listings in high-end establishments are less informative and often feature esoteric wording with little explanation. Menus found in cheaper restaurants often provide information such as explanations; e.g., "slowly cooked in Bourgogne pinot noir"; recommendations, e.g., "our signature dish" and "original"; and descriptions of a special aspect of the dish, e.g., "bluefin tuna from Tsukiji". The menu at upscale French restaurants is difficult, often even for the French. When explicating the history of restaurants and particularly in the early days of restaurants, Spang (2000, pp. 185-186) wrote:

> The menu ostensibly listed a restaurant's offerings, but it did so in a language that few found especially informative. The affluent, educated, and Francophile travelers of the early nineteenth century did not often fret about their linguistic abilities, but even native speakers of French were not guaranteed to understand a menu.

Service in lower price categories often emphasizes rapid delivery whereas upscale services tend to be slower. While good service tends to mean expedience, expensive service, or at least service related to high culture, tends to be the opposite. Fast service appears vulgar and quotidian; sophisticated services represent leisure and spaciousness. Service employees should also behave graciously; hurried behavior implies lack of sophistication. Similarly, service employees should not be too friendly, as being overly gracious might indicate a lack of confidence. Rather, these providers should look professional and focus on service, not on customer evaluation.

Intersubjectivity in Popular Services

Because the intersubjective framework suggests that any service, as long as value is co-created, entails intersubjective struggle, we can see many examples in casual, popular settings. Take the example of coffee shops, which tend to be accessible to the mass population. Here, menus often feature obscure or foreign names. Sizes of coffee begin with "short" and then "tall" instead of small, regular or large. After that, sizes may continue to Grande, Venti, and Enorme. These are not English

words, and customers in the U.S. would traditionally not be familiar with them. Why would this business need, or want, to use words that customers do not know? The answer is precisely that these words should not be known to the customers. A known offering seems to be all too familiar and therefore carries no special value. Similarly, a casual Italian restaurant the author studied in Japan used Italian names such as Pizza Melanzane and Pizza Salsiccia Piccante. The restaurant even used quotation marks to list these names; that is to say, these are proper names that customers do not necessarily know. The data includes cases where customers struggled to pronounce these names; many customers instead pointed at the menu and said, "This." At another fast-food hamburger restaurant in Japan, the author also saw cases in which customers had trouble stating some of the menu items that were not straightforward. The company used these names to indicate that these selections are special. Therefore, even relatively reasonable services can entail intersubjective struggle. We need to understand that using obscure names involves the negation of customers because this act suggests that the service is more sophisticated than the world with which the customers are familiar.

On the other hand, it is true that there are many services that seek to minimize any struggle. For instance, if hospital service is organized to be difficult to understand or even intimidating, this would be a serious problem—in fact, many of them are problematic in this way. In general, hospitals need to be designed for accessibility. How can we reconcile this fact with the argument so far? The answer is that subjectivity and intersubjectivity are both relevant to any social setting, and for a hospital, the subjective value is important. That is to say, how a patient, the subject, views the service of the hospital, the object, has an important reality. The patient has a problem, e.g., illness that must be addressed, and does not need to implicate him or herself in this process. In this subjective framework, providers do not consider what kind of person this patient is; that is, what value this patient has vis-à-vis the value of the hospital. They only need to address the patient's problem.

Yet, even in the hospital setting we still need to consider intersubjectivity in terms of value co-creation. If the service context is jointly created by care providers and patients, the patients are inevitably implicated in the service to a certain extent. Therefore patients would try to show that they have a serious problem that needs more attention, and that they are considerate individuals who deserve more respect from physicians. Physicians understand that whatever they say and do is not simply an act of medical care but also affects the patient/doctor relationship. They need to both maintain authority in a consultation and show compassion to reassure patients. All these actions are in the intersubjective realm. How each person presents his or her own self is important for the service.

Therefore, any service is a mixture of subjective and intersubjective value (Helkkula et al., 2012). Even sushi bars have subjective value. Namely, the quality of sushi is critical for the customers who view the service from a distance. This is subjective because the customer (subject) is evaluating the sushi (object). In the next move, however, how this customer is related to and qualified for this valuable sushi experience becomes an issue, i.e., the intersubjective value. Customers try to show

that they can discern subtle differences in taste and express opinions and responses in a way that exhibits their competence. Nonetheless, how the customer subjectively judges the objective sushi, e.g., whether it is tasty, is a significant issue.

While this discussion appears to uphold the assumption that subjective and intersubjective values are separable as different phenomena, subjective value is in fact inseparable from intersubjective value. The intersubjective presentation of self is not separated from a subjective judgment of what is offered objectively. The type of subjective judgment one makes has an intersubjective meaning to others in the situation. Sushi connoisseurs tend to value sushi that is subtle and novel, which ordinary customers tend to find strange. Bourdieu (1984) made it clear that taste differs depending on one's position in a social structure, and thus is important domain of intersubjective struggle where individuals try to prove their value. Subjective taste depends on intersubjective relations and vice versa. Therefore, no claim is made that the subjective value of the sushi is unimportant; it is suggested that the value rests on a complex entanglement of the different realms. We need to understand the mixture of these different realms of value for each service context.

Intersubjective value requires practices that are quite different from those required for subjective value. For example, in terms of the subjective value of having a medical issue addressed, a hospital must be designed to be accessible and shown to be caring. Yet, to demonstrate authority and high level of medical knowledge, physicians may surround themselves with medical texts and diplomas, speak using professional jargon, and keep a certain distance from patients. That is to say, accessibility and inaccessibility are both required in subjective and intersubjective value respectively.

Implications

The Intersubjective Perspective on Service

We began with a puzzle in which one particular type of service appeared to contradict the existing wisdom on service; specifically, the service was organized so as to intimidate customers. The intersubjective perspective offers a new way to solve this puzzle. Typical explanations of service tend to separate the subject (actors) and the object (service); the actor or beneficiary subjectively judges the value of the service that is objectively posited. In this framework, intimidating customers makes little sense. In contrast, as we have seen both theoretically and empirically, the intersubjective perspective allows us to understand that the act of intimidating customers can be a reasonable strategy because service, as long as it is about value co-creation, involves some degree of negation of the actors in an interaction. Here, many customers then try to prove themselves by showing their competence. Others,

being less confident customers, present a more moderate and humble self. Either way, presentation of self is part of service. We have also seen that even if intimidation is not observable in some services, service in general, including those not in the upscale category, encompasses some elements of negation and thereby the intersubjective struggle.

Thus, we can now examine some core concepts of S-D logic from the intersubjective perspective. S-D logic researchers have emphasized the interactional and intersubjective nature of value co-creation (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006; Edvardsson et al., 2010; Helkkula et al., 2012; Löbler, 2011), which cannot be reduced to particular characteristics within each individual. In these interactions, then all actors are implicated and implicate others in the service (Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). From this perspective, we will discuss concepts of value and resources. The discussion remains within the general promise of S-D logic, which is founded on the intersubjective orientation (Löbler, 2011), and strengthens this theoretical foundation.

First, how can we consider value from the intersubjective perspective? Service involves not only the value to a beneficiary but also the value of the beneficiary. Once again, this dual nature arises because each actor is an inseparable part of the service. When an actor considers the value of a service, she is considering the value of herself who is part of the service. She needs to present herself as valuable, for instance, as knowledgeable, experienced, and qualified. It is rather obvious that the service provider's value is inherently tied to the value of the service. A competent chef creates valuable service, and thus the identity of the chef is inseparable from the service. In a subtler manner, the value of the customers is part of the value of the service in the sense that they seek to define themselves as valuable vis-à-vis the service in which they are implicated.

Therefore, the study results overlap with the observation of Helkkula, Kelleher & Pihlström (2012, p. 3) in that "it appears that even if service customers individually experience value, they also tend to share certain type/types of experience/experiences with other service customers, that is, the data are intrasubjective and intersubjective." Yet, one more distinction is necessary to clarify the intersubjective nature of value: Value is intersubjective not only because multiple customers "share" the same type of experience but also because the customers are implicated in the value. One's subjective judgment of value is an intersubjective act and therefore involves the presentation of one's self. This more radical intersubjectivity helps bridge the individual and social value. The value is social not simply because we are drinking the same bottle of wine and our experiences coincide. It is social because value is an interactional issue; when one person says, "I like the notes of spicy oak" and another returns, "I don't think so; I think it is too much, but I do like the crisp finish," the value judged is intersubjectively presented. The value here implicates the actors themselves, e.g., their competence, experience, knowledge and skills as they present and negotiate their selves. This creation of value occurs even when participants do not explicitly talk. When an individual tastes the wine in isolation, he is referring not only to the wine but also to himself: "Who am I that I can taste this wine in this way? Can others react in the same way?"

The service could still be valuable if customers' problems are fixed and specific requirements are fulfilled. Such values are, however, more or less predefined; customers had a problem to fix or requirement to fulfill prior to the service and not so much as a result of co-creation. To address such problems or requirements, actors still need to integrate various resources in collaboration with various other actors. Nonetheless, to fully appreciate the co-creative nature of value, we should not reduce value to individual characteristics, such as a problem or a requirement that one person has, but rather examine what happens between individuals—intersubjectivity. When a problem is solved or a requirement is fulfilled through interactions, the actors in these situations present and negotiate their selves.

Second, the concept of resource must be discussed. There is some ambiguity in the S-D logic literature as to the relationship between resources and actors. On one hand, scholars suggest that actors "have," "use" and "apply" resources (e.g., Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2016). On the other hand, scholars have also written that "The customer is primarily an *operant resource*" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 7) and that "actors themselves as resources within a particular context" (Chandler & Vargo, 2011, p. 38). Are resources *objects*—whether tangible or not—that actors possess, apply, and integrate? Or are resources *subjects* that act and constitute the network in which service is achieved? The intersubjective framework is useful in helping us answer these questions.

There is nothing wrong in suggesting that humans "have" or "possess" operant resources, namely knowledge and skills. Yet, from the intersubjective standpoint, possession is an act that is meaningful in relation to others. Certainly, experienced sushi customers have extensive knowledge of fish, vinegar, and rice, as well as skills for distinguishing subtle flavors and textures. These operant resources are inseparable from who these customers are. Possessing these elaborate resources constitutes their identity, namely sushi connoisseurs. Perhaps, the verb "to possess" may not be the right word to talk about operant resources (Cook & Brown, 1999), as actors perform the resources and this performance is also theatrical in Goffman's (1959) sense.

This intersubjective view is in line with Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 2), who clearly stated this idea, "resources *are* not; they *become*" (emphasis in original; see also, Zimmermann, 1951). The construction of context performatively brings a resource into existence; "resources 'become' resources largely as a function of the contexts in which they are embedded" (Chandler & Vargo, 2011, p. 39), an idea that can be developed more thoroughly through the concept of intersubjectivity. Here we can add that this becoming of an objective resource involves the becoming of a subjective one. When an actor makes one resource relevant, the actor presents her own self and thereby constructs and transforms her identity. In the case of sushi culture, the fact that a customer has mastered and thereby performs the proscribed knowledge and skills better than a chef would expect implies how she can present and negotiate her own self as a customer. Through this intersubjective presentation and negotiation by means of her use of resources, she *becomes* a certain customer.

In this sense, actors are not inputs to service in that they have requirements fulfilled through the service. Rather, they are outcomes of the service. They *are* not; they *become*. Service should be considered as a process through which actors become that which they have not been before. Of course, it is not meant that the individuals' previous existence is trivial, or that completely new individuals emerge out of service. The point is simply that the individuals cannot be separated from the service. When service is jointly achieved and value is co-created, individuals are also co-created. Just as service is not created in a vacuum and is always constructed by utilizing available resources, individuals are also so constructed.

Although this chapter began by trying to solve the puzzle seen in service at sushi bars and then, to this end, examined cases of customer-provider interaction, the theoretical ideas discussed are not limited to dyadic or direct face-to-face interactions. It is a practical strategy to focus on interactions of a small group so that we can keep the analysis manageable. Yet, the theoretical implications drawn from this analysis are discussed with broader interactions in mind. Even when actors do not directly interact, as long as value is co-created and subjects are implicated in the objects, their selves are presented and negotiated. Servicescapes are designed carefully to present the type of service proposed. This is part of the presentation. When we walk into a luxurious hotel, a professionally equipped medical facility, or an elegantly furnished meeting room in a law firm, we feel we need to behave in a certain way and thereby present certain selves, even without direct interactions with others. Similarly, presented with some tangible goods—appliances—people are in indirect interaction. Again, in many restaurants chefs are working in the kitchen and typically do not directly interact with customers. Nonetheless, the chef still seeks to impress customers, and the customers demonstrate that they can appreciate the subtlety. This is also the case between a viewer and the filmmakers when people watch a film at home or between a learner and an instructor in the case of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on a computer.

Decentering Service Systems

Service science has emphasized the relational nature of service systems. The definition of service systems recursively includes other service systems; Spohrer, Maglio, Bailey, and Gruhl (2007, p. 72) wrote:

> More precisely, we define a service system as a value-coproduction configuration of people, technology, other internal and external service systems, and shared information (such as language, processes, metrics, prices, policies, and laws). This recursive service system definition highlights the fact that service systems have internal structure (intraentity services) and external structure (interentity services) in which participants coproduce value directly or indirectly with other service systems.

Service systems are inherently open and defined by their relations with other internal and external service systems. This recursive definition needs to be taken literally; we should not think that service systems exist first and then become connected with each other, in which case no recursion would be necessary. Each connection that a service system makes with another service system alters what the service system is; hence, the definition of this system includes other service systems. We need to decenter service systems and cease to see them as independent and firm subjects that lay underneath service. Instead, we should inquire into how service systems define themselves by tracing the connections that they make (see also, Latour, 2007).

Furthermore, service systems are not defined externally. They define themselves. Service systems are seen to be constantly trying to define themselves by creating connections with other service systems. To define itself, a service system makes use of various distinctions vis-à-vis other systems and therefore definition is always relational. Self-definition through altering the connections inevitably alters the other service systems. This also means that value changes as systems connect to other systems. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that these self-definitions are not subjective acts; definitions are joint achievements. One's presentation may be accepted, challenged, ignored, or suspended by others.

Implications for Practice

Practitioners need to take intersubjective struggle seriously. As we have seen throughout this chapter, services designed and practiced based solely on the subjectivist point of view miss an important aspect of value co-creation. If we make service accessible and easy, we should be aware that this choice of action, which could be a viable strategy to improve many services that are poorly designed, would have an intersubjective meaning and alter the relationship between actors, e.g., a service provider becoming slightly subservient to a customer. In service, satisfying a customer is a tricky issue. The fact that customers as well as other actors need to be negated to some degree should not be taken lightly as mere theoretical rhetoric. We need to consider the option of rendering the service more difficult for customers, at least in some respects. How we do this depends on the category of service. For a service targeting elite customers, we could render the service largely difficult and esoteric and also design the service to carry an element of tension. For a more casual service, we need to keep the service accessible and comfortable for the general population while implementing some parts of negation, e.g., Italian words used in coffee shops and a non-quotidian atmosphere.

It is obviously wrong to simply challenge customers for no reason. The key is to consider what actors, particularly customers, strive to become through the service. As long as these customers have not yet achieved what they want to be, the customers are then to be negated. This approach is markedly different from trying to

understand what customers want. Of course, this by no means implies that we should ignore what customers want; it only suggests that the dialectical struggle has revealed the contradiction in such a move. That is, to address what the customers want may work against them. It would be overly idiosyncratic to suggest that customers want to be negated and tested while paying an expensive bill. It is more realistic to suggest that customers are facing a dialectic struggle and cannot be unilaterally satisfied.

Negating customers is a risky move. If negation is thorough, this kind of service may not appeal to everyone and some customers may be put off. This course of action could reduce business at the expense of obtaining a smaller but core group of customers that seriously but critically appreciate the service. Furthermore, service providers who test customers can also be tested by customers with a high level of knowledge, experience and skills. Service can be contentious both for customers and for service providers. For these reasons, it is more comforting to try to fulfill customers' requirements or solve customers' problems. Negating customers, at least in some aspects, requires service professionals to be confident. It would make no sense to superficially imitate the style and patterns of interaction. Intersubjectivity implies that all the participants should implicate themselves in the service and thereby take risks.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the notion of intersubjectivity in general and dialectical struggle in particular by drawing on service-dominant logic, which decenters the traditional categories of firms and consumers and emphasizes the interactions through which actors co-create value. As long as service is value co-creation, with multiple actors working together, service is intersubjective. Therefore as service is an intersubjective phenomenon, actors are implicated in the setting and cannot separate themselves as subjects from the object. The participants need to present who they are. The value of service encompasses the value of involved parties. Struggle is an inevitable consequence of value co-creation. This fresh theoretical orientation advances S-D logic in the direction of its fundamental premise.

The discussion illustrated that intersubjective struggle is not peculiar to sushi service but applicable to higher class service in general. Furthermore, it has been shown that even popular services demonstrate some aspects of struggle, such as businesses using obscure names or creating a refined atmosphere that customers feel they should make an effort to match. On the other hand, it is also too simplistic to suggest that service should negate customers and only seek to create situations that are difficult to navigate. The basic question is what customers become, and service should create a culture that embodies an answer to this question. If this is done, the service will present culture that is somewhat unfamiliar to the customers and thereby negates them and lets them struggle to present their selves.

Finally, if we are to emphasize intersubjectivity, we need to decenter all service elements. Individuals and service systems are achieved results of service, not its inputs. While service science has emphasized "humans" that are part of the system (Spohrer & Maglio, 2010; Schneider & Bowen, 2010), this does not necessarily mean that we need to be human-centric in a sense that we should cater to what humans want and need. If we treat humans and human agency properly, we need to acknowledge that these individuals need not be unilaterally satisfied, but they are to be recognized. Who they are matters in service. In the end, the concept of human should not be decided upon prior to service science; it must be its achievement.

Although this chapter has tried to keep the theoretical discussion sufficiently general as to be applicable to various kinds of service, it has predominantly used examples of personal services, particularly restaurants. Empirical investigations are clearly needed in other service contexts such as hospitals, transportation, education, and entertainment. In particular, the relationship between what have been characterized as subjective and intersubjective values needs further clarification. Although these are theoretically inseparable, how participants deal with these values in actual service practice needs careful analysis. Furthermore, S-D logic is critical of restricting the concept of service to traditional service businesses and places service at the foundation of any economic exchange, including non-service sectors. Still, as long as value is co-created, any service, namely the application of specialized knowledge and skills for the benefit of another actor or the actor him/herself, should be intersubjective. Yet, we still need to consider the relationship between intersubjectivity and value co-creation in cases where an individual uses products on his or her own. These situations that require and co-create value-in-context require further clarification that should be based on empirical analyses.

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